PIANO
CLASSICS
CIRCLE
Sun Hee You piano
Music by Hyung-ki Joo & Billy Joel

CIRCLE

MUSIC BY HYUNG-KI JOO & BILLY JOEL

Hyung-ki Joo (b.1973)
Childhood
An Album of 10 Piano Pieces (2021)

1.	The Little Prince	1'39
2.	Stardust	0'56
3.	Hiding the Tears	2'47
4.	Remy's 1st Birthday	1'28
5.	Ancient Childhood	1'33
6.	Poème for a Snail	2'26
7.	Wondering While Wandering	2'13
8.	The Girl Who Never Knew	3'23
9.	Watching my Balloon Fly Away	0'42
10.	Childhood 1979	3'30
11.	**Chandeliers** (2001)	6'41
12.	**Funk Yeah! for Four Hands** (2024) Commissioned by, and dedicated to *Sun Hee You/ Played by Sun Hee You & Hyung-ki Joo*	1'39

Billy Joel (b.1949)
Selections from Fantasies & Delusions
Arranged by Hyung-ki Joo
Op.8 Suite for Piano (star-crossed) (2001)

13.	Innamorato	7'08
14.	Sorbetto	1'35
15.	Delusion	3'47
16.	**Op.1 Soliloquy (On a separation)** (1997)	11'28

Sun Hee You *piano*

Sun Hee You is the perfect pianist to capture the essence and spirit of both my own piano compositions and the classical piano music of Billy Joel.

When Billy Joel commissioned me to help bring his instrumental piano works to life through arranging and notating them, he said he needed a pianist who could play his music the way he envisioned it. The album I ended up recording was titled "Fantasies and Delusions", Joel's final commercial album to date.

In a 2011 interview, Joel said, "I'm actually the closest to this recording [Fantasies & Delusions] of any of the recordings I've done. This is more 'me' than anything right now."

I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have been the one entrusted with his deeply personal music. And now, my good fortune continues as Sun Hee You brings her own extraordinary interpretation to my music—often in ways I never imagined. As a composer, it's a thrilling experience to hear your music interpreted by another artist, and at times, the performer's vision can transcend the composer's original conception.

"Fantasies and Delusions" was released just weeks after the tragedy of 9/11, an event that profoundly impacted me, especially as I was living in New York City at the time. The tragedy moved me to write my first piano piece, "Chandeliers". Amidst the destruction, pain, and suffering, there was an undeniable presence of light and humanity. In the aftermath of the attacks, I witnessed the best of what humanity is capable of, and I couldn't help but think how ironic it was that such a tragedy could bring out the best in all of us. I remember seeing vigils everywhere—hundreds of thousands of candles lighting up the sky. So much light, in the midst of so much darkness. I pictured chandeliers of light swirling around the city's skyscrapers. That was the inspiration for "Chandeliers".

Years later, “Chandeliers” became a special piece for Sun Hee. During the Covid lockdowns, she even created a music video of her performance, bringing the piece to life in a deeply personal way.

On my album “Childhood”, one piece specifically ties back to Billy Joel: “Remy’s 1st Birthday”. I had the honor of being invited to the first birthday of Billy’s daughter, Remy. For the occasion, I composed a piece inspired by the two musical notes in her name—Ré and Mi. The amusing twist? After I performed the piece for Billy and his wife, I spoke about the connection between her name and the notes, only for Billy to tell me that he had never made that connection himself!

As the caretaker of Billy’s piano pieces, and the “parent” of my own, I place my trust in Sun Hee You completely. I know that, with her extraordinary emotional depth and sensuous virtuosity, this music is not only in safe hands but is alive through her in a way that is pure magic. I am confident that listeners will be captivated by the beauty and emotion that she brings to every note.

I’ve long dreamed of writing a piece that could be performed by more than just two hands—where the additional hands could belong to someone with no formal musical training, a beginner, or even two different people. So, when Sun Hee asked me to write something for the two of us to perform together on her new album, it felt like the perfect opportunity to make that dream a reality.

This piece offers endless possibilities in how it can be performed. It could invite someone from the audience to join in, playing with just two fingers, or be expanded to include three or four players, each handling just one hand of the piano. You could even add percussionists to play around the piano, incorporating different textures and rhythms. The possibilities are limitless. The only conditions are to have fun and bring the funk! YEAH!”

Hyung-ki Joo

“BRAVO!
These pieces have been beautifully interpreted by Sun Hee You.
I’m very touched by the emotions invested in them.
The Star-Crossed Suite is better than I imagined it could be and the Soliloquy is precisely as I conceived it.
Congratulations to this wonderful pianist. Please accept my thanks for the effort that went into this recording”.

Billy Joel

“Listening to Sun Hee You playing my music reminds me once again that the composer is not always right! Her insightful and imaginative interpretations made me change and rethink several things in the score. For many years I was reluctant to write for piano solo, and now I’m so glad that I overcame my inhibitions. Sun Hee has a truthful and earnest approach to all the music she touches, and I am confident that listeners will be captivated by the poetry and emotion that she brings to every note”.

Hyung-ki Joo

HYUNG-KI JOO

Hyung-ki Joo's compositions have been performed by orchestras, ensembles, and soloists, such as the New York Philharmonic, Tonhalle Orchestra Zürich, Komische Oper Berlin Ensemble, Meta4, Emanuel Ax, Asmik Grigorian, Tine Thing Helseth, Daniel Hope, Valentina Nafornita, Natasha Paremski, Yuja Wang, and recorded by artists suchas Shani Diluka, Sun Hee You, Ahn Piano Trio Miro String Quartet. His music is published by Universal Edition and Modern Works.

Hyung-ki Joo has collaborated with Academy®Award-winning composer, Vangelis, and was chosen by Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Billy Joel, to arrange and record Joel's solo piano works on his last album to date, Fantasies and Delusions. He has also regularly co-written works with his duo partner, Aleksey Igudesman, and together they have been commissioned to write works for orchestras such as the Pittsburgh Symphony, Dusseldorf Symphony, New York Philharmonic, and, Tonhalle Orchestra Zürich.

His teachers have included Simon Parkin and Malcolm Singer for composition and improvisation, harmony with Peter Norris, counterpoint with Joel Feigin, and theory with Nils Vigeland.

He was recently commissioned by Scuola Holden to compose a song based on texts by Alessandro Barrico from his novel "Novecento", commemorating the 30th anniversary of the book.

"*The beauty of his writing emerges with ingenious subtlety, as he knows full well that you need to seduce listeners with charm before devastating them with emotion.*"
Hans Zimmer

BILLY JOEL

An artist who needs no introduction, more than 160 million records sold, six Grammys awards in his trophy case, 13 studio albums, including one of classical music, 15 published collections, not to mention sold-out concerts all over the world, Billy Joel, one of the most successful artists of all time.

Singer-songwriter, pianist, composer, William Martin Joel was born on May 9, 1949 in the Bronx, New York. His father was a German-born Jewish pianist and businessman. His mother was the child of two English immigrants. Billy began taking piano lessons at age 4. “Piano Man,” as he is nicknamed in reference to his famous song of the same name, emerged as a soloist in the early 1970s. From 1971 to 1993, he released twelve studio albums ranging from pop and rock, while in 2001, his great passion for classical music led to releasing the classical solo piano music collection called “Fantasies & Delusions”. He commissioned his friend pianist-composer Hyung-ki Joo to arrange the album and was recorded by Joo himself for the Sony label. The record immediately topped the classical charts.

He has released several CD-DVDs taken from live concerts, including The Millenium Concert, My Lives, 12 Gardens Live, Live at the Shea Stadium.

His unique and distinguishable musical and vocal style endears him to music lovers all over the world, filling stadiums and concert halls with enormous success.

SUN HEE YOU

South Korean pianist Sun Hee You represents a new generation of classical musicians, distinguished by both tradition and innovation. After winning numerous competitions in her early years, she trained at Seoul's prestigious Yewon School, renowned for nurturing child prodigies. At thirteen, she made her solo debut with the Yangeum Orchestra, performing Beethoven's Concerto No.2 and Haydn's Concerto in D Major.

At fourteen, she moved to Italy, graduating with honors from the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia in Rome. She continued her studies with the legendary Lazar Berman and Valentina Berman, and refined her artistry under the guidance of Bruno Canino, Oxana Yablonskaya, Boris Petrushansky, and Paul Badura-Skoda. Her passion for chamber music led her to further training at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia with Rocco Filippini.

Known for her affinity with 20th-century repertoire, Sun Hee You recorded Alfredo Casella's La Partita for Piano and Orchestra for Naxos, earning a Grammy Award nomination. Her album dedicated to the Ukrainian composer Nikolai Kapustin — blending classical technique with jazz language — sold out in Korea within two days of release. Her commitment to new music has also inspired collaborations with contemporary composers, notably Marco Quagliarini, who dedicated his Murale concerto for piano and orchestra to her — a work published by Suvini Zerboni. She has performed at major venues and festivals including the Society of the Quartet of Milan, the Aquilana Society of Barattelli Concerts, the Chigiana Music Academy, The Quirinale Concerts, Festival of Nations, Ravello Festival, Roma Jazz Festival, Ohrid Festival, Konzerthaus Berlin, and Seoul Arts Center. She has appeared as a soloist with orchestras such as the Abruzzese Symphony, Rome Symphony,

Kaunas Symphony Orchestra, and Stara Zagora Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of conductors including Julian Kovachev, Rui Massena, Pavel Berman, Francesco Ivan Ciampa, and Yun Ho Chu.

In addition to her concert activities, Sun Hee You embraces special cross-genre collaborations. She was a special guest on the Alchemaya tour with Italian singer-songwriter Max Gazzè, performing in prestigious venues such as the Baths of Caracalla, the Sferisterio of Macerata, the Arena of Verona, and the Ancient Theater of Taormina, introducing the music of Rachmaninov to wide pop audiences.

During the pandemic, she released the single Chandeliers — composed by Hyung-ki Joo in New York following 9/11 — as a message of hope and resilience. The accompanying video, conceived, written, and directed by Sun Hee You herself, was filmed in a hauntingly beautiful location in Abruzzo, abandoned after the devastating earthquake, and showcasing her multifaceted artistry beyond the concert stage.

Recording: Recording: September 23-25, 2024 Studio G&G Ardea Rome, Italy
Sound engineer and musical supervision: Giovanni Caruso
Steinway Piano technician: Mauro Buccitti
Steinway D274 Grand Piano by "Alfonsi", Rome
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